



## South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



# GOVERNOR PROCLAIMS WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

At the request of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, Gov. Dennis Daugaard has proclaimed Thursday, March 30, 2017, as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day," calling on all South Dakotans to recognize the courage, service and sacrifice of the men and women who served during the Vietnam War.

"Through the establishment of an annual statewide Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans recognition day, South Dakotans can express their appreciation and honor the men and women who served during the Vietnam War," said Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs.

"In 2006, South Dakota unveiled our memorial honoring these heroes. This combat weary soldier is a tribute to the men and women who served their country at a time when it took as much courage to come home as it did to fight," said Zimmerman.

"It is important that we pause, remember and recognize the bravery of all who served and to do all that we can to help heal the wounds of war," said Zimmerman. "Although their service can never be repaid, America must never forget their service."



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## 8TH ANNUAL MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART OF THE DAKOTAS CONVENTION

The Military Order Of The Purple Heart Chapter No. 5354 of Rapid City will host the Military Order Of The Purple Heart (MOPH) 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Department Convention at the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Headquarters (101 E Madison St.) in Rapid City on May 6, 2017.

All veterans who have been awarded the Purple Heart Medal are invited to the MOPH 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Department Convention.

Reservations for the luncheon and banquet dinner can be made by contacting H G Krosshell at (605) 348-5898 or e-mail at [hgkrossshell@rushmore.com](mailto:hgkrossshell@rushmore.com). Hotel reservations can be made by calling the Howard Johnson Inn & Suites (950 North Street) in Rapid City (1-888-578-4657) or (605-737-4656). The room rate is \$62.

Mark Williamson, MOPH Department Commander states that the following items will be discussed during the convention:



federal and state legislation, VA Health Care, VA Budget, Claims Processing, Agent Orange, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injuries, and Persian Gulf Syndrome.

The Agenda also includes:

- 10:00 a.m. Open Session
  - Distinguished Guests
  - Veterans Town Hall Meeting
    - Sioux Falls VA Director Darwin Goodspeed
    - VA Veterans Service Center Manager Shawn Bohn
    - VA Vet Center Team Leader
    - South Dakota Congressional Delegation and/or Staff
    - SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman
- 12:00 p.m. Luncheon (R.S.V.P.)
- 1:30 p.m. Business Meeting
- 6:00 p.m. Banquet (R.S.V.P.) Social and Dinner
  - Guest Speakers
  - MOPH
  - MOPH National Region III Commander
  - Awards Presentation
  - Installation of newly elected officers for FY 2017-2018

## VA FIXES VETERANS CRISIS LINE

In response to the recently released VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) report that reviewed processes from June 6 through Dec. 15, 2016, of the Veterans Crisis Line (VCL), the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released the following statement: "The VA is proud to announce that the challenges with the Veterans Crisis Line have been resolved. Prior to the opening of our new Atlanta call center, our call rollover rate often exceeded 30 percent. Our current call rollover rate is less than one percent, with over 99 percent of all calls being answered by the VCL."

"Suicide prevention is one of our highest priorities," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs David J. Shulkin. "Fixing the Veterans Crisis Line was a critical step in keeping our commitment to veterans."

To reach a VA professional, who is specially trained to attend to emotional crises for veterans and service members:

- Dial the National Suicide Prevention Hotline number, 800-273-TALK (8255). Veterans should choose option 1 to reach a VCL responder.
- Text 838255 — A VCL responder will text back.
- Chat online at <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

## SECRETARY ZIMMERMAN SPEAKS AT SRST CODE TALKERS HONORING CEREMONY

Last Friday, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe honored 17 of their Code Talkers during a "Talking to Hide Things Code Talkers" Ceremony in Wakpala.

SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman served as the keynote speaker and was honored to be able to thank the family members of these heroes.

Code Talkers honored were: James W. Alkire, Hanray A. Ankle, Sr., Wallace Cross, Ambrose Gabe, Charles Has Horns, Jasper Iron Cloud, Edward A. Lafromboise, Eli Little Bird, Isaac Looking Back, George Loves War, Harry Loves War, Edmund Many Deeds, Sr., Matthew Oka, Charles Red Bear, Benedict Red Legs, Jesse Taken Alive, and Eugene Walking Shield.

Special thanks to Manaja Hill, Kevin Jamerson, and Colette Walking Elk for organizing and coordinating this wonderful honoring ceremony.



During World War I and II, hundreds of American Indians joined the United States armed forces and used words from their traditional tribal languages as weapons. The United States military asked them to develop secret battle communications based on their languages—and America's enemies never deciphered the coded messages they sent. "Code Talkers," as they came to be known after World War II, are twentieth-century American Indian warriors and heroes who significantly aided the victories of the United States and its allies.



## SDSU HOLDS RIBBON CUTTING AT THEIR NEW VETERANS RESOURCE CENTER

Last week, South Dakota State University hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony for their new Veterans Affairs and Resource Center in Brookings. The new resource center is located in Brown Hall.

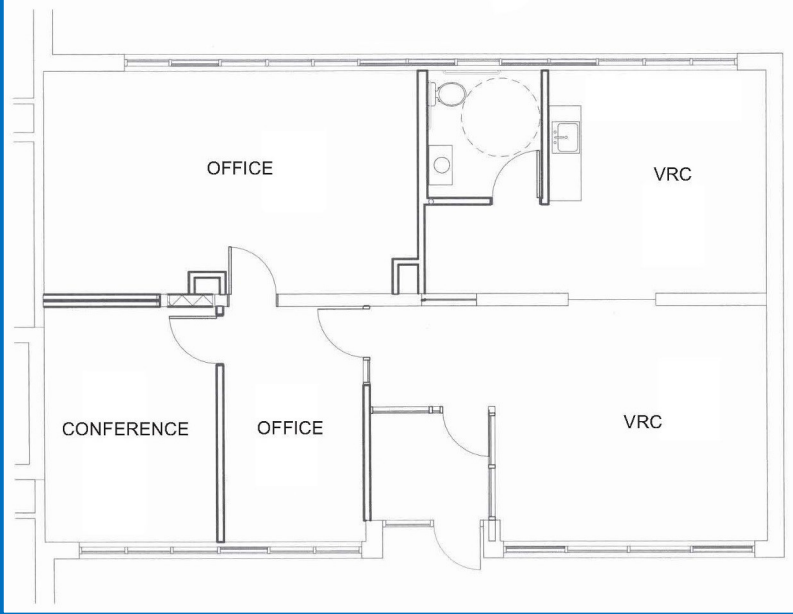
The mission of the SDSU Veterans Affairs Office is to assist military veterans, their family members and their survivors in obtaining all federal and state educational benefits and entitlements they have earned by serving in the United States military, and to provide guidance and support services that will aid veterans in their transition to academic and civilian life.

SDSUS carries out this mission by coordinating programs specifically for veterans, by having a federal certifying official to assist with financial aid, by assisting students who are deployed and still enrolled at SDSU, by working with returning National Guard units and other active-duty personnel to assist with admission/re-admission to SDSU, and by working collaboratively with Financial Aid,

Counseling Center and Disability Services to provide services and support for SDSU veterans.

In 2017, SDSU was ranked 8th best for veterans colleges in the nation by Military Times and was named a "military friendly school" for five straight years by Victory Media. (Photos courtesy of SDSU)

### Veterans Affairs & Resource Center



## USD STUDENTS TO PRESENT THEIR RESEARCH ON CLAY COUNTY FALLEN HEROES

University of South Dakota School of Education students will present research findings to representatives of the Vermillion Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3061 and American Legion for a project called "Clay County's Fallen" on Wednesday, March 29.

The project, sponsored by the Vermillion VFW 3061, involved 20 USD students in 7-12 Social Science Methods researching and writing a biography about the life of a fallen veteran from Clay County. Students researched fallen heroes from the World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War eras. SDPB will be interviewing Professor Williams and two of the students next Thursday.

"I can tell the students are connected with their fallen hero and are inspired by this project which they hope to implement into their future classrooms," said Jing Williams, assistant professor of curriculum and instruction.

The top five presentations will win a cash prize. The first place winner will be invited to speak at the Memorial Day Observance in Vermillion on May 29. All participating students will be invited to attend the ceremony.

USD's School of Education is transformative in preparing students both inside and outside the classroom. Its research- and practitioner-based programs train future educators, counselors, leaders, fitness and sport-related professionals for successful careers. The school focuses on a comprehensive learning experience, lifelong learning, and developing professionals grounded in best practice. The school's divisions include counseling and psychology, curriculum and instruction, educational administration, and kinesiology and sport science.



## STANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE IS ADVERTISING FOR A VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER II

Manaja Hill, Veterans Service Officer for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, has informed us that they are in the process of advertising for a Veterans Service Officer II. This individual will work with Manaja as they continue to grow the services and programs within their department of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Veterans Affairs Office. If you know of any veteran that might be interested in the position, please have them contact Manaja at 701.854.3826. The position closes March 30, 2017.

## VIETNAM VETERANS IN LINCOLN AND UNION COUNTY WERE WELCOMED HOME AND RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR SERVICE

Over 65 Vietnam Veterans received a “welcome home” and a big “thank you” for their service last weekend in Beresford.

Susan Irons, Lincoln and Union County Veterans Service Officer hosted a special honoring ceremony for them at the Bridges in Beresford Saturday. Members of the Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota Patriot Guard and the American Legion Riders greeted the veterans as they arrived. Once inside, veterans were greeted by CVSO Irons and SDDVA Field Service Officer Michael Maske. Maske and Irons presented them with a commemorative Vietnam War Veteran lapel pin and certificate, thanked them for their service and welcomed them home.

After Irons made her presentation she opened the floor for the veterans to introduce themselves and share their story — some did, some didn't. In her message Irons thanked the veterans for using their homecoming experiences as an impetus to change and make the homecomings better for the service men and women that followed them. She personally thanked them for the welcome home she was given when she returned home from Desert Storm.

Veterans thanked Irons for this special day and gave her a standing ovation.



## APRIL IS THE MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD



Don't forget, April is the “Month of the Military Child.” It's our opportunity to thank our military children and youth for their contributions, strength, and service.



# Upcoming Events

Mar. 29—"Clay County's Fallen" Research Contest—USD School of Education—Room 118—Vermillion—5:00-8:00 pm (CT)  
Apr. 13—SFVAHCS Veterans Town Hall—Dakota Playhouse—DSU Campus—Madison—5:00 pm (CT) with Benefits Fair at 4:00 pm (CT)  
Apr. 13 Purple Up for Military Kids Day  
Apr. 19—SD Veterans Council Meeting—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)  
Apr 28-30—DAV Annual Convention—AmericInn—Fort Pierre  
May 6—Military Order of the Purple Heart Convention—Rapid City Howard Johnson—10:00 am (MT)  
May 12—Improving Combat Veterans Care—Sioux Falls University Center  
Jun 10—SD Marine Corps League annual meeting—Pierre Post 8 (520 W. Pierre Street) - 10:00 am (CT)  
Jun 15-18—SD American Legion State Conference—Watertown  
Jun 22-25—State VFW Convention—Pierre  
Aug. 14-17—SDDVA Annual Benefits School—Pierre—Ramkota

Here's  
What's  
Happening!

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer  
South Dakota Department of the Military <http://military.sd.gov>  
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>  
Soldiers and Sailors Building - 425 E Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501  
Phone: 605-773-8242  
E-mail address: [audry.ricketts@state.sd.us](mailto:audry.ricketts@state.sd.us)

